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DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04568-4

Concern for the Transgressor's Consequences: An Explanation for Why Wrongdoing Remains Unreported

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Word count: Main text: 10,677; Abstract: 205; References: 3,354; Tables: 669; 6 figures and 4 tables

Abstract

In the aftermath of shocking workplace scandals, people are often baffled when individuals within the organization were aware of clear-cut wrongdoing yet did not inform authorities. The current research suggests that moral concern for the suffering that a transgressor might face if a crime were reported is an under-recognized, powerful force that shapes whistleblowing in organizations, particularly when transgressors are fellow members of a highly entitative group (i.e., a group that is perceived as highly unified). Two experiments show that group entitativity heightens concern about possible consequences that the transgressor would face if a crime were to be reported, and that this concern reduces the likelihood of reporting wrongdoing in organizations to authorities. Further, the studies identify a mechanism through which concern about the transgressor is heightened in highly entitative groups: potential reporters perceive that the transgressor felt remorse for their crime. Thus, when fellow members of highly entitative organizations commit crimes, people are more likely to imagine that these transgressors felt anxiety or guilt about their actions, and this prompts greater concern for transgressors in ways that encourage people to let them "off the hook." We discuss the implications of these findings for how reporting to authorities can be encouraged within highly entitative organizations.

Keywords: moral judgment, whistleblowing, transgressions, remorse, entitativity

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In 2015, the biotech start-up Theranos was valued at 9 billion dollars because of its purported breakthroughs in blood testing technology. As early as 2006, several high-level employees voiced their concerns and suspicions that the device Theranos was designing could not do what the company claimed. However, it was not until eight years later in 2014 when these concerns were finally voiced to regulatory agencies by former employees Erika Cheung and Tyler Shultz. The company imploded in October 2015 when investigative reporter John Carreyrou published a series of articles exposing the company's fraudulent practices, which included faking results during demonstrations of the devices (Dunn, Thompson, & Jarvis, 2019). The faulty devices had been used nearly 1 million times in California and Arizona and were it not for the whistleblowers, untold damage would have occurred (see Carreyrou, 2018).

After such scandals, people inevitably ask, "Who knew about this, and why did they not report it?" The Theranos scandal received enormous media attention and may seem like an extreme example, yet ethical lapses in organizations are not unusual – nor is it unusual for employees to remain silent when they witness these lapses. In the most recent National Business Ethics Survey of 6,579 United States employees, 41% of the respondents reported witnessing wrongdoing at their workplace and more than 1/3 of those potential reporters opted to do nothing about it (Ethics Resource Center, 2014). It is surprising to see so many examples of people failing to take action when they become aware of criminal activity because this silence is itself a form of wrongdoing. Some researchers even refer to failure to report as "fallacious silence" to emphasize that this lack of action is an act of complicity because it enables wrongdoing to persist (Knoll & Dick, 2012; MacGregor & Stuebs, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Why, then, do people

so often fail to report other people's wrongdoing? What concerns weigh on a person's decision to ultimately inform the authorities or remain silent?

The decision to report a crime or not raises complex moral considerations (Dungan, Young, & Waytz, 2019; MacGregor & Stuebs, 2014; Smith-Crowe & Warren, 2014). Past research has shown that these moral considerations often involve others beyond the self. For example, concern for a valued social group can discourage reporting crimes that are committed by fellow group members. Even at a young age, group loyalty competes with other moral considerations such as honesty (Fu, Evans, Wang, & Lee, 2008) and self-focused concerns such as obtaining more resources (Horwitz, Shutts, & Olson, 2014) in decision-making. A study of five-year-old children's decisions to report a moral transgression committed by an ingroup or outgroup member found that especially when transgressions were severe, children were less likely to report on an ingroup member (Misch, Over, & Carpenter, 2018). Among adults, valuing loyalty to one's group reduces the likelihood of reporting ingroup members' transgressions (Waytz, Dungan, & Young, 2013). Further, concerns about others outside the ingroup can predict whistleblowing. In a study involving hypothetical and actual reports of whistleblowing across a wide variety of job sectors, Dungan et al. (2019) found that moral concern, defined as concern for the well-being of others, was a significant predictor of reporting behavior. Specifically, concern for the general well-being of the public and loyalty to their organization and fellow members emerged as the most critical predictors for actual whistleblowing - even beyond variables typically studied in the whistleblowing literature such as organizational features (e.g., perceptions of efficiency and fairness), situational factors (e.g., fear of reprisals, importance of protections) and motivational variables (e.g., job satisfaction, recognition of work). Given its importance as a predictor in real-life whistleblowing cases, the impact of moral concern for

various parties affected by wrongdoing on decisions to report workplace transgressions or not, as well as the factors that prompt this moral concern, have been relatively understudied in the whistleblowing literature.

Building on this previous research, we propose that moral concern may also extend to concern about the transgressor and their well-being. Specifically, we suggest that perceiving that a transgressor experiences remorse for their crimes can deter people from whistleblowing because this perceived remorse increases concern for the transgressor with respect to their potential suffering if a crime were to be reported. Further, we propose that when a transgressor and potential reporter are part of a group that is perceived as highly unified or entitative, people are particularly likely to imagine that a transgressor felt greater remorse (e.g., guilt, anxiety) about their actions, and this ultimately leads people to be more concerned about how reporting the crime would negatively impact the transgressor and hinders reporting in organizations. Although the literature on whistleblowing has documented how a diverse set of concerns for the self (e.g., MacGregor & Stuebs, 2014) and loyalty to one's in-group (Misch, Over, & Carpenter, 2018; see Van Vugt & Hart, 2004) influence the likelihood of reporting a crime, the literature has not considered how moral concern for the transgressor could impact reporting and how it might be particularly likely to do so in organizations that are highly entitative. The present studies thus fill key gaps in our understanding of the psychological motivations of the whistleblower, addressing: (a) to what extent concern for the well-being of others when weighing decisions to report a crime includes concern for the transgressor, (b) whether perceived group entitativity shared between the transgressor and the potential reporter influences this concern, and (c) whether perceived remorse is an underlying mechanism that prompts concern for the transgressor and influences decisions to report wrongdoing.

These findings make theoretical contributions to different literatures. First, we add to the literature on whistleblowing by documenting how moral concern for a transgressor can reduce the reporting of wrongdoing alongside more self-interested concerns for one's self and in-group. Second, we add to literature examining how moral emotions influence decision-making in the workplace, a topic that has received increased interest in management research (see Greenbaum, Bonner, Gray, & Mawritz, 2019 for a review; see also Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse, & Kim, 2014). Finally, our research adds to the literature on organizational culture. As competition for high skilled knowledge workers has increased, for example among high-technology start-up companies and other entrepreneurships, organizational practices increasingly attempt to create a culture that fosters identification and loyalty to the organization in hopes of increasing productivity and retention (Alvesson, 2000; Baron & Hannan, 2002; Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, 2003). The present research adds to this literature by presenting some of the downsides of an organizational culture that emphasizes unity. We conclude by offering some suggestions for how reporting wrongdoings could be encouraged in the context of highly entitative organizations.

Barriers to Reporting Transgressions

Whistleblowing has been defined as "the disclosure by organizational members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action" (Near & Miceli, 1985). The literature on whistleblowing suggests that a variety of barriers to reporting can arise from the moment when an employee observes activities that are questionable or illegal, and these barriers shape whether an employee decides to report the activity, leave the organization, or remain silent out of loyalty or neglect (Miceli & Near, 1992). Briefly, some factors that influence reporting relate to the type of harm perpetrated (Fredin, 2011; Gino & Bazerman, 2009), structural or cultural

features of the organization or group involved in the wrongdoing (Callahan & Dworkin, 1994; Vadera, Aguilera, & Caza, 2009), and whether potential reporters possess non-conforming personality traits (Bjørkelo, Einarsen, & Matthiesen, 2010; Chiu, 2003; Dungan, Waytz, & Young, 2015). Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) shows that contextual variables such as organizational climate, threat of retaliation, severity and type of wrongdoing, and proof of evidence are most relevant to whistleblowing.

Some of the other barriers identified in the literature are related to the motivation to protect various parties in an organization who could be adversely affected if a crime were to be reported. Past research has focused on how self-interested factors, such as concern for the self and concern for others such as one's ingroup, can shape reporting behavior. Below we briefly discuss past research that examines how concern for the self and group impacts reporting, and then present our theory for how concern for the transgressor might hinder reporting.

Protecting the Self

There are several self-interested factors that might encourage reporters to disclose wrongdoing observed in organizations. For one thing, not reporting may be costly to one's internal image. People experience self-condemning emotions such as shame and guilt when they fail to live up to their own moral standards (Daniels & Robinson, 2019; Leary, 2002; Leary & Miller, 2000; Leith & Baumeister, 2008; Vess, Schlegel, Hicks, & Arndt, 2014). In addition, a person's moral reputation may come under fire if people find out that they had prior knowledge of wrongdoing but did not report it. In fact, the potential reporter may be held accountable for their knowledge of the crime and put themselves at risk; much research has explored the desire to protect oneself against such accusations of complicity (e.g., MacGregor & Stuebs, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003).

Yet there are real and psychological costs for potential reporters when it comes to reporting wrongdoing. Social identity theory and research on whistleblowing suggests that people are afraid of experiencing rejection by others within the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dworkin & Baucus, 1998; Smith & Brown, 2008). Reporting the crime might get them branded as traitors. In a study examining actual whistleblowers who were named in fraud cases, 82% of them reported fallout from their reporting, ranging from experiencing a hostile workplace environment, receiving unfair demotions, to getting fired (Dyck, Morse, & Zingales, 2010). Whistleblowers often regret their actions and state that if they could undo the past, they would never have reported wrongdoing in the first place.

Protecting the Group

Potential reporters' decisions may also be shaped by the motivation to protect a valued ingroup. When a group member's behavior is unambiguously negative, potential reporters may be particularly sensitive to how the transgressor's crime may tarnish their own and their group's reputation (Castano, Paladino, Coull, & Yzerbyt, 2002; Khan & Lambert, 1998). This sensitivity may lead individuals to act to protect the group's reputation at the expense of the transgressor (e.g., exposing the transgressor and publicly ousting them from the group). The desire to protect oneself and one's group from a transgressive group member can be accounted for by what is known as the "black sheep effect" (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988), in which people judge deviant ingroup members more negatively than comparable outgroup members and thus readily expose their wrongdoing. Therefore, under certain circumstances, concern for the group seems likely to facilitate the reporting of crimes.

However, ample research documents a human tendency to favor and protect ingroup members over outgroup members (e.g., Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Brewer, 1979). As a

result, it is reasonable to expect that people are less inclined to report transgressions from ingroup members. Protectiveness may even lead an ingroup member to minimize the severity of a crime committed by a fellow ingroup member or to diminish its impact on the victim (e.g., Hewstone, 1990; Otten & Moskowitz, 2000; Otten & Wentura, 1999). Beyond ingroup and outgroup distinctions, when a particular group is considered important to one's identity, then concern for the group could hinder reporting transgressors. A person may be concerned that the group's reputation will be tarnished by its association with the transgressor and therefore avoid reporting the crime (see Pereira & van Prooijen, 2018).

Protecting the Transgressor

Some research suggests that people should be motivated to condemn a transgressor for their crime. Research from moral psychology suggests that witnessing moral transgressions by others elicits "other-condemning" emotions (i.e., contempt, anger, and disgust; Haidt, 2003). Of these emotions, anger has the greatest potential to direct corrective responses (Ford, Agosta, Huang, & Shannon, 2018; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011; Lindebaum & Geddes, 2016). However, moving from witnessing wrongdoing to seeking corrective measures is not simple; experiencing anger is subject to a number of moderators, such as transgressor's perceived intent (Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2011), a victim's reactions to the offenses committed (Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, & van Dam, 2017), and participant's beliefs in the victims' deservingness of the treatment received (Mitchell, Vogel, & Folger, 2015). Thus, witnessing transgressions does not invariably lead someone to condemn the person who has committed the crime.

We suggest in the current research that a particularly influential obstacle in moving from witnessing a wrongdoing to reporting it arises from experiencing a competing moral emotion – concern for others' suffering (Greenbaum et al., 2019; Narvaez, 2010). Reflecting on the serious

consequences a transgressor may face such as legal action or social ostracism may increase concern for the transgressor's suffering. This seemingly altruistic concern may have a downside in that it motivates people to remain silent even in the face of clear-cut wrongdoing. Further, as we discuss next, humanizing the transgressor by perceiving them as experiencing remorse or regret over their wrongdoing may facilitate this type of concern, which then impedes reporting.

Perception of Remorse

We predict that perceiving that a transgressor experiences remorse for their actions will facilitate concern for the transgressor and reduce crime reporting. This prediction is supported by research suggesting that a person's displays of emotion can affect our social judgments of this person (Szczurek, Monin, & Gross, 2012). When an individual is seen as experiencing moral emotions such as shame and regret, these expressions of emotions can be appeasing and reduce the likelihood of punishment (Giner-Sorolla, Castano, Espinosa, & Brown, 2008; Morris & Keltner, 2000). In particular, guilt and remorse are key emotions associated with greater forgiveness of the perpetrator of crimes (Adams & Inesi, 2016; Gold & Weiner, 2010). If a transgressor expresses remorse, it increases empathy for the transgressor and positive appraisals of them (Hornsey et al., 2019). Thus, if a person perceives greater remorse from a transgressor, then this person may be more inclined to feel concern for the transgressor's suffering, and these concerns may lead the person not to report even clear-cut wrongdoing.

Recent research has shown that negative impressions of moral transgressors can be easily swayed by the occasional presentation of good behavior by that person (Siegel, Mathys, Rutledge, & Crockett, 2018). People appear prone to favorably amend their negative moral judgments of others; it seems that people often want to believe the best in others. Given this, if a person appears to express remorse for their crime, others may readily latch on to this as an

opportunity to see that transgressor in a more positive light. Next, we suggest that this motivation may be particularly true when the transgressor and the potential reporter are part of a group that is perceived to be highly entitative.

The Role of Entitativity

Whistleblowing cases overwhelmingly involve an ingroup member reporting about another fellow member within an organization or group. Therefore, making ingroup and outgroup distinctions are less relevant in the present context than holding the fact that a transgression takes place in an ingroup constant and examining factors within an ingroup that shape reporting likelihood. We propose that entitativity is a key feature of groups that will influence reporting of ingroup members' crimes. Despite the paucity of research on the impact of entitativity in work organizations, researchers theorize that this concept may play an important role in organizational dynamics such as job satisfaction and commitment (Blanchard, Caudill, & Walker, 2020). As of yet, studies have not examined the influence of group entitativity on whistleblowing.

Entitativity is used to describe the *perception* of group unity or coherence by both members inside and outside of the group, (Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Campbell, 1958; Hamilton, Sherman, & Lickel,1998; Lickel et al., 2000; Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001). Most recently, Blanchard, et al. (2020) provide a simpler definition of entitativity as "an individual's cognitive assessment of a social unit as a 'group.'" (p. 92). This definition emphasizes that most research on entitativity has focused on the antecedents or consequences of perceiving and categorizing people in a group-like fashion. For example, Lickel et al. (2000) found that perception of entitativity is predicted by several group properties such as size, permanence, impermeability, but most importantly, perceived group member interdependence (e.g., having

interactions around common goals). Blanchard et al. demonstrate that similarity, history, common goals, and interactivity operate as antecedents to entitativity (see also Crump, Hamilton, Lickel, Sherman, & Thakkar, 2010). Researchers studying entitativity have examined different kinds of groups in various literatures, with relationship researchers focusing on intimacy groups such as family and friends (e.g., McConnell, Buchanan, Lloyd, & Skulborstad, 2019), organizational researchers focusing on task groups such as work colleagues (e.g., Meneses, Ortega, Navarro, & de Quijano, 2008), and social psychologists looking broadly at the antecedents and effects of entitativity on social identity, collective responsibility, prejudice and stereotyping (e.g., Crawford & Salaman, 2012; Newheiser, Tausch, Dovidio, & Hewstone, 2009; Roets & Van Hiel, 2011; Spencer-Rodgers, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2007). In past research, intimacy groups (e.g., family) were categorized as having the highest entitativity followed by task groups (e.g., work groups, student groups) and then social categories (e.g., ethnicity, gender) (Lickel, 2000).

Some past research has explored how perceptions of group entitativity affect observers' perceptions of wrongdoing. For example, researchers have found that perceptions of outgroup entitativity influence whether outsiders hold the outgroup collectively responsible for an individual group member's wrongdoing (Adelman, Yogeeswaran, & Lickel, 2019; Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames, 2006; Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003; Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006). This blaming of the group, in turn, increases outsiders' willingness to punish the entire group (Lickel et al., 2006; Newheiser, Sawaoka, & Dovidio, 2012) especially when the group is disliked. Not only are members of high entitativity groups held collectively responsible for wrongdoing, but they are also seen as collectively representative of each other. Therefore, when wrongdoing occurs, apologies from members of high entitativity

groups on the behalf of the group were more effective in repairing grievances than apologies from members of low entitativity groups (Leonard, 2019).

Other research has explored how members of highly entitative groups react to fellow group members' wrongdoing and suggests that when wrongdoing occurs in highly entitative groups, people are motivated to repair the harm caused by others. In past research, members of highly entitative groups experienced vicarious guilt over an ingroup member's wrongdoing and this feeling led to a desire to repair the wrongdoing on the behalf of the ingroup member and the group (see, Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier, & Ames, 2005). In this aforementioned study, however, the wrongdoing was highly public and could not be refuted. It is possible that vicarious guilt would not be elicited in the same way when harm is concealable; when a transgression is not known to the public, the desire to protect one's group member from potential suffering might outweigh the desire to repair the harm by reporting the wrongdoing.

We propose that entitativity may strengthen concern for the transgressor when the potential reporter has a choice to report wrongdoing or not. If a transgressor is a fellow member of an entitative group, then potential reporters may be more likely to imagine that this transgressor felt guilt or remorse when they committed wrongdoing, thereby increasing concern for the transgressor and the consequences this transgressor would face if the crime were revealed. This humanization of the transgressor may generate greater concern for their well-being and reduce a person's willingness to report wrongdoing. Below, we briefly describe how entitativity is expected to moderate this causal relationship.

In three studies, Lickel et al. (2000) investigated perceptions of entitativity by group type; whether characterized as task or intimate, groups rated as entitative were seen as interactive, important, sharing common goals and outcomes, and were perceived to have similar

members. Therefore, entitativity conceptually encompasses many considerations related to engaging with an individual belonging to an interdependent group (relationship value, future interactions, etc.) and thus can lead to differential treatment of a transgressor. Typically, task groups are associated with achievement whereas intimacy groups are associated with bonding and affiliation (Johnson, et. al, 2006), so when work relationships take on characteristics people associate with intimacy groups, relationships and obligations to task group members may start to resemble those typically found in relationships with family members (Lickel et al., 2001).

Although the literature tends to neatly distinguish between task groups that might be found at the workplace and intimate groups that comprise our personal networks, these group delineations are increasingly blurred in modern organizational cultures. For example, researchers from the Stanford Project on Emerging Companies (SPEC) devoted eight years to study the organizational structures of over 200 Silicon Valley California high-technology start-up companies and found that many founders deliberately "envisioned creating a strong family-like feeling and an intense emotional bond with the workforce that would inspire superior effort and increase retention of highly sought employees, thereby avoiding the mobility of key technical personnel that frequently plagues Silicon Valley start-ups" (Baron & Hannan, 2002, p. 10). Therefore, organizational cultures devoted to creating communal bonds may also lead to situations where fellow task group members can elicit similar protective feelings people generally have for their family and other intimate group members.

The role of entitativity when protecting the transgressor. As mentioned earlier, research on the Black Sheep Effect would suggest that in situations where criminal behavior is unambiguous and threatens the group's reputation, people would not protect the transgressor in favor of protecting the group and its reputation. This may be true when the transgression is minor

and the consequences of the infraction are minimal for other group members, which describes the scenarios used in the Lewis and Sherman (2010) study examining the role of entitativity in protecting the group. However, real life cases show that people often choose not to turn in fellow group members who have committed a crime, perhaps especially when wrongdoing takes place in high entitativity groups. In fact, the tendency to protect close others is so well known that U.S. law recognizes that family members have a unique relationship to a transgressor that exempts them from certain forms of criminal complicity (Markel, Collins, & Leib, 2009). Given that entitativity fosters ingroup bias (see Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens, & Paladino, 2000), it may also facilitate concern about the consequences for the transgressor. When (in contrast to the non-criminal situation examined in the Lewis and Sherman study) a transgressor is at risk of facing serious consequences for their actions, entitativity may increase protective instincts toward a group member and thus lower the likelihood of reporting.

Further, there is reason to believe that entitativity would foster perceptions of remorse among transgressors. As previously mentioned, people experience vicarious guilt in connection with high entitativity group members (Lickel, et. al, 2005). Research also suggests that people are more likely to attribute complex, secondary emotions (e.g., humiliation, guilt) to ingroup members than to outgroup members (e.g., Leyens et al., 2001), and the same may be true of members of higher vs. lower entitative groups (Newheiser et al., 2012; Pereira & van Prooijen, 2018). Thus, members of highly entitative groups may more easily imagine that a fellow group member felt anxiety or guilt about their actions, in turn heightening concern for them and their outcomes.

The Present Studies

Given that many organizations cultivate loyalty and closeness as core values amongst their team members, it is not unusual for people who work together to mentally consider the group as unified in the same way as their family or close friends. We predict that when a person is part of a group that is highly entitative in this way, people will have a greater tendency to humanize fellow group members and infer their regret or remorse about their actions, which then increases concern for the transgressor's outcomes and reduces the likelihood of reporting the wrongdoing. Figure 1 illustrates our conceptual model.

In Study 1, we compared responses to a transgressor when entitativity between the participant and the transgressor was heightened (i.e., the transgressor was a family member) or reduced (i.e., the transgressor was a member of their university). We assessed the relationship between participants' perceptions of the transgressor's remorse, their concern for that person's outcomes, and the likelihood of reporting the crime. In Study 2, building on research suggesting that entitativity is higher for intimacy groups than task groups (Lickel, 2000), we varied entitativity by describing the culture of the organization as either comprising of a tight-knit group where people felt a high degree of closeness with their colleagues (i.e., the organization had characteristics of both task and intimacy groups) or a culture where people only interacted professionally (i.e., the organization had characteristics of only task but not intimacy groups). We tested perceived remorse as a key mechanism in our theory by manipulating whether or not a transgressor expresses remorse directly in the scenario and then assessing this manipulation's impact on concern for the transgressor and its relation to the likelihood of reporting the crime to an authority figure.

Study 1: Does Perception of Remorse and Concern for the Transgressor Impact Reporting?

In this study, participants imagined either a family member (high entitativity) or a fellow university student (low entitativity) committing a crime, and we measured their perceptions of the transgressor's remorse, their concern for the transgressor, self, and group, and their likelihood of reporting the crime.

Method

Participants

A total of 187 undergraduate students (50 men [26.7%], 137 women [73.3%]) recruited from a private West Coast university participated in the experiment in exchange for partial course credit for their Introductory Psychology class. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 24 years (M=18.89, SD=1.25). Participants' races/ethnicities were: Asian/Pacific Islander (N=64[34.2%]), Latino/Latino American (N=33[17.6%]), White/Caucasian (N=65[34.8%]), African American/Black (N=10[5.3%]), and Other (N=15[8.0%]).

Design and Procedure

In a 2 (entitativity: high or low) x 3 (crime severity: mild, moderate, or extreme) between-subjects design, participants imagined either a family member (*High Entitativity* condition) or a fellow university student (*Low Entitativity* condition) stealing either a small (*Mild Severity* condition), fairly large (*Moderate Severity* condition), or very large (*Extreme Severity* condition) amount of money.

Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to understand how people form judgments of others in hypothetical scenarios. First, participants were given 5 minutes to write 6-8 sentences about their thoughts and feelings about the importance of their family (in the *High Entitativity* condition) or university (in the *Low Entitativity* condition), to make the condition-relevant group more salient. Next, participants read a hypothetical scenario involving

either a family member (*High Entitativity* condition) or fellow student (*Low Entitativity* condition) committing a crime within an organization.

Depending on the condition, the scenario read as follows:

"You uncover a secret that no one else knows. A [family member/student at your university] who works with visually impaired older adults has been taking money from them. It is unclear how long this activity has been going on. This [family member/student at your university] does not know that you are aware of their crime. Even though it has been a [small/fairly large/very large] amount of money, chances are it would take a long time (if ever) for anyone to put a stop to this." Participants then completed the outcome measures described below.

Crime severity (i.e., the amount of money stolen) was varied to test whether the findings generalized across crimes of different magnitudes. For example, perhaps higher entitativity would only prompt group members to perceive greater remorse among transgressors if the crime were minor. However, a manipulation check indicated that our manipulation of crime severity was not successful (please see the Supplement for details). Accordingly, we do not discuss this variable further in the main manuscript, but we controlled for it in the following analyses to ensure that results hold when accounting for this manipulation and we provide a more detailed discussion of this variable in the Supplement.

Measures

Likelihood of reporting the crime. After reading the scenario, participants responded to questions on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very likely*) about the likelihood of them reporting the crime to responsible authorities, including the police and the head of the organization (e.g., "How likely are you to inform the police about this person's stealing?", 2 items, $r(185)=0.79$).

Perceptions of transgressor remorse. Participants reported whether they thought the transgressor felt any remorse ("Do you think that the family member/student felt any guilt or anxiety before or after deciding to commit the crime?", 1 item, 1=*not at all,* 10=*a great deal*).

Concern for the transgressor, group, and the self. Several similar items measured concern for various parties who may face consequences if the crime were reported on a scale from 1=*not at all concerned* to 10=*extremely concerned*. Concern for the transgressor was measured through the following item: "I am concerned about the negative consequences for the person stealing if I report this crime." Concern for one's group was measured through the following item: "I am concerned about the negative consequences for my [family/university] if I report this crime." Concern for the self was measured through one item: "I am concerned about the negative consequences for myself if I report this crime." We measured concern for the self and one's group in order to control for these competing mechanisms linked to reporting behavior established in the previous literature.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using maximum likelihood estimation with the *lavaan* package (Rosseel, 2012) to test whether our five-factor model of the dependent variables (i.e., including separate factors for reporting likelihood, transgressor remorse, concern for the transgressor, concern for the self, and concern for the group) was an appropriate fit for the data. The model fit was acceptable, with a Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.94, a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.98, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .098, 90% confidence interval (CI): [0.021, 0.180]. The full five-factor model did fit the data significantly better than a single-factor solution ($\chi^2(6)=157.50$, $p<0.001$). There were significant positive correlations among the three factors of concern for the transgressor, group, and self which ranged

between r=0.38 and r=0.66 (see Table 1), supporting the idea that these factors were related (e.g., a person who showed more concern for the transgressor also showed more concern about their group) but also distinct.

Analyses

All analyses were conducted with *R* (version 3.3.1, https://www.R-project.org/). Partial eta-squared (η^2_P) was calculated using the *lsr* package (Navarro, 2015). Cohen's *d* and its 95% confidence interval were calculated using the *effsize* package (Torchiano, 2017). Tables were created in part using the *apaTables* package (Stanley, 2018). To facilitate transparency, we have posted the survey materials, deidentified data, a codebook, and scripts for data analysis for both studies on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/pqh7a/.

Results

Analytical Strategy

All analyses of variance were Type III and predicted the dependent variable with entitativity condition (high or low) and crime severity condition (mild, moderate, or severe). Contrasts were coded to compare the low entitativity condition (-1) to the high entitativity condition (1). Analyses included two dummy codes to omit the mild crime severity condition (0) and compare it first to the moderate crime severity condition (1) and then to the extreme crime severity condition (1).

Correlations between the measures of concern for the various parties, likelihood of reporting to various entities, and perceptions of the crime, as well as their descriptive statistics, are presented in Table 1.

Effect of Entitativity on Likelihood of Reporting the Crime

Entitativity affected participants' decision to inform authorities about the crime, F(1,

183)=59.89, p<0.001, η^2_P=0.25 (see Figure 2). Participants who imagined a member of a higher entitativity group committing a crime were less likely to decide that they would inform the authorities about the incident (M=5.02, SD=2.45) than participants who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group committing a crime (M=7.65, SD=1.91), M_{Diff}=-1.32, 95% CI:[-1.65, -0.98], t(183)=-7.74, p<0.001, d=-1.17[-1.48, -0.85].

Effect of Entitativity on Perceived Transgressor Remorse

Entitativity also shaped the degree to which participants imagined that their fellow group member felt remorse about their crime, F(1, 183)=27.50, p<0.001, η^2_P=0.13 (see Figure 2). Participants who imagined a member of a higher entitativity group committing a crime felt that the person who committed the crime had experienced more anxiety and guilt about their actions (M=6.60, SD=2.25) than participants who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group committing a crime (M=4.74, SD=2.56), M_{Diff}=0.93, 95% CI:[0.58, 1.28], t(183)=5.24, p<0.001, d=0.78[0.47, 1.09].

Effect of Entitativity on Concern for the Transgressor

Entitativity affected how concerned participants reported they would be about the transgressor suffering consequences if they reported the crime, F(1, 183)=134.98, p<0.001, η^2_P=0.42 (see Figure 2). Participants who imagined a member of a higher entitativity group committing a crime reported greater concern for the transgressor (M=7.74, SD=2.34) than participants who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group committing a crime (M=3.49, SD=2.56), M_{Diff}=2.12, 95% CI:[1.78, 2.48], t(183)=-11.62, p<0.001, d=1.75[1.40, 2.09].

Mediational Analyses

We then conducted mediational analyses to test whether entitativity increased perceived remorse, which then increased concern for the transgressor, which in turn predicted decreased

reporting, in line with our theorized model (see Figure 1). To test whether our hypothesized relationships persist when other mechanisms the literature suggests should predict concern for the transgressor and reporting likelihood are accounted for, we controlled for concern for the group and concern for the self as two competing mechanisms also associated with reporting likelihood, as well as the variables related to perceived crime severity.

Supporting our theorized model, higher entitativity predicted greater perceived transgressor remorse, B=0.85, 95% CI:[0.49, 1.21], SE=0.18, t(180)=4.66, p<0.001, greater perceived transgressor remorse predicted increased concern for the transgressor, B=0.33, 95% CI:[0.19, 0.47], SE=0.07, t(179)=4.62, p<0.001, and greater concern for the transgressor predicted decreased likelihood of reporting the crime, B=-0.34, 95% CI:[-0.48, -0.19], SE=0.07, t(176)=-4.60, p<0.001 (see Table 2 for regression coefficients for the other variables included in the models). We calculated a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effects of entitativity on concern for the transgressor via perceived transgressor remorse, and of perceived transgressor remorse on reporting likelihood via concern for the transgressor, using bootstrapping with 5,000 simulations in the *mediation* package (Tingley, Yamamoto, Hirose, Keele, & Imai, 2014). The 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects did not include zero, for both the pathway of entitativity → perceived transgressor remorse → concern for the transgressor, 95% CI:[0.25, 0.95], and the pathway of perceived transgressor remorse → concern for the transgressor → reporting likelihood, 95% CI:[-0.21, -0.04], indicating that our mediational hypotheses were supported (see Figure 3).

As our mediators (perceived remorse, concern for the transgressor) and outcome measure (reporting likelihood) were assessed during the same experimental session, endogeneity concerns arise (e.g., Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2014). Accordingly, we conducted two-

stage least squares (2SLS) regression analyses using the *ivreg* function from the package *AER* (Kleiber & Zeileis, 2008) to test whether endogeneity was present and whether the observed relationships appeared robust to concerns of endogeneity. In the 2SLS regressions, we used the experimental condition (high vs. low entitativity) as an instrument when predicting concern for the transgressor with perceived transgressor remorse, and when predicting reporting likelihood with concern for the transgressor variable. The Wu-Hausman test for both of these models were significant, p's<0.024, suggesting that endogeneity was present for the measures of perceived transgressor remorse and concern for the transgressor. However, in these analyses, perceived transgressor remorse significantly predicted greater concern for the transgressor, B=2.35, 95% CI:[1.40, 3.30], SE=0.48, t(182)=4.85, p<0.001, and concern for the transgressor significantly predicted reporting likelihood, B=-0.81, 95% CI:[-1.22, -0.39], SE=0.21, t(179)=-3.78, p<0.001, thus indicating that the statistical inferences that perceived transgressor remorse predicts greater concern for the transgressor, and that greater concern for the transgressor decreases reporting likelihood, are robust to concerns of endogeneity.

Discussion of Study 1

Study 1 reveals two key factors that impact the decision to report a crime or not: level of group entitativity and perception of a transgressor's remorse about the crime they committed. Specifically, higher entitativity in the group of which the potential reporter and transgressor were both members increased the likelihood of participants' experiencing concern for the consequences faced by the transgressor if the wrongdoing were revealed. Most importantly, imagining that a person from a highly entitative group committed a crime also increased the likelihood that people inferred that the transgressor experienced remorse over committing the crime, which then reduced the likelihood of reporting the crime to someone with the power to

stop the behavior.

Unresolved Issues from Study 1

Although Study 1 showed that reporting wrongdoing can be undermined by potential reporters' perceptions of a transgressor's remorse, several issues remain. First, Study 1 manipulated level of entitativity by describing the transgressor as a family member or someone from the same university. It stands to reason that judgments involving family members incurs a different psychological cost than other highly entitative groups and therefore the results cannot be generalized beyond this particular group membership.

Second, the scenario used in Study 1 involved a financial crime where only one victim was affected. Although participants clearly regarded the behavior as wrong, exploring an ethical dilemma that is more common to the workplace would better help us understand why people fail to report wrongdoing in situations more common in workplace organizations. Moreover, the use of a non-college sample and a scenario emulating a real-life case where people within an organization failed to report wrongdoing will help inform whether the causal mechanisms we have identified can be generalized to these cases as well.

Finally, the first study measured perceptions of the transgressor's remorse as opposed to manipulating this key variable. A design involving manipulation of this variable allows a more definitive test of the causal impact of remorse on the likelihood of reporting wrongdoing. In addition, Study 2 contains multiple dependent measures for each of the model's key variables.

Study 2: Testing the Causal Relationship Between Transgressor's Remorse and Reporting Wrongdoing

In this study, participants read a scenario describing an act of medical fraud in a biomedical start-up company where a colleague exaggerates the effectiveness of a medical

device created to detect pediatric cancers. This serious act of fraud would potentially place many young children at grave risk. As previous research suggests that intimacy groups have higher entitativity than task groups (Lickel, 2000), to vary entitativity, participants were told that their workplace consisted of either a very tight-knit group of people who interacted regularly and were close, thus creating a group with the characteristics of both task and intimacy groups (high entitativity), or that it consisted of a group of people who only interact professionally, thus creating a group with the characteristics of only a task but not an intimacy group (low entitativity). To build on Study 1 and manipulate perceived remorse, participants imagined confronting the transgressor about their wrongdoing and we varied whether the transgressor either expressed remorse or did not express any remorse. We expected that both high entitativity and expression of remorse would increase concern over the transgressor's potential suffering and would therefore reduce the likelihood of reporting the crime to authorities.

Method

Participants

A total of 420 participants recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk participated in the experiment via an online survey. A total of 375 participants (89.3%) passed all of the four attention checks that we included in the survey, and the following analyses are among this subsample of participants, although results using the full sample do not differ substantially. In the final sample, participants were mostly men (224 men [59.7%], 148 women [39.5%], 3 non-binary [0.01%]) and their ages ranged from 18 to 76 years (M=36.61, SD=11.66). Participants' races/ethnicities were: Asian/Pacific Islander (N=33[8.8%]), Latino/Latino American (N=27[7.2%]), White/Caucasian (N=269[71.7%]), African American/Black (N=32[8.5%]), and Other (N=14[3.7%]).

Design and Procedure

In a 2 (entitativity: high or low) x 3 (expressed remorse: control, no remorse, or high remorse) between-subjects design, participants read a scenario in which they imagined witnessing wrongdoing at work.

In the *High Entitativity* condition, the scenario began: "Imagine that you work at a medium sized biomedical start-up where everyone on the staff has worked together for a long time. It's a tight-knit group where everyone is very close to each other and you often spend your free time outside of work with your co-workers." In the *Low Entitativity* condition, the scenario began differently: "Imagine that you work at a medium sized biomedical start-up where everyone on the staff has worked together for a long time, but you are not close to each other at all. Your relationships are professional rather than personal and it is rare that you spend any free time outside of work with your co-workers." We thus varied group entitativity while holding the organization constant.

Then, in all conditions, participants read about the wrongdoing: "You uncover a secret that no one else knows. A colleague has been falsely exaggerating the medical effectiveness of a new device they created to detect different types of cancers among young children. It is unclear how big of a lie this is and how many people have been potentially harmed."

Then, we varied whether or not the transgressor expressed remorse. In the control condition, participants read: "When you confront your colleague, they give no indication that they will stop and chances are it would take a long time for anyone to discover this." In the *No Remorse* condition, participants instead read: "When you confront your colleague, they tell you that they don't see it as a problem and say that they think it's fine to project better results than the reality of the situation. They give no indication that they will stop and chances are it would

take a long time for anyone to discover this." Finally, in the *High Remorse* condition, participants read: "When you confront your colleague, they tell you about how much pressure they are under and say that they do feel bad about their actions. They give no indication that they will stop and chances are it would take a long time for anyone to discover this."

To test whether this manipulation was successful, we asked participants in a series of questions whether they thought the transgressor felt any remorse (e.g., "Do you think your colleague feels regret for committing this crime?", "Do you think that your colleague feels remorse about this crime", 4 items, alpha=0.95, 1=*not at all,* 10=*a great deal*). As we intended, in a one-way analysis of variance predicting perceived transgressor remorse with the remorse condition variable, remorse condition predicted the degree to which participants believed that that the transgressor felt remorse for their crime, $F(1,372)=48.00$, $p<0.001$. Participants who read that the transgressor explicitly expressed high remorse for their crime imagined that this transgressor felt more guilty and anxious about their actions ($M=6.08$, $SD=2.26$) than participants who read the control condition ($M=3.75$, $SD=2.25$), $M_{Diff}=2.33$, 95% CI:[1.77, 2.88], $t(372)=8.22$, $p<0.001$, $d=1.03$[0.77, 1.30], or who read the condition in which the transgressor explicitly stated that they did not feel bad about their actions ($M=3.53$, $SD=2.27$), $M_{Diff}=2.55$, 95% CI:[1.98, 3.12], $t(372)=8.77$, $p<0.001$, $d=1.12$[0.85, 1.40]. Thus, our manipulation seems to have been effective. Interestingly, participants seemed to feel that the transgressor felt as little remorse in the control condition as in the explicit no remorse condition, $M_{Diff}=0.22$, 95% CI:[-0.34, 0.78], $t(372)=0.77$, $p=0.443$, $d=0.10$[-0.15, 0.34].

Measures

Likelihood of reporting the crime. After reading the scenario, participants responded to questions on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very likely*) about the likelihood of them reporting

the crime to various responsible authorities, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that approves new medical devices and procedures, a whistleblowing hotline at the company, and the CEO of the company (e.g., "How likely are you to inform the FDA about this person's crime?", "How confident are you that you would report this crime to the CEO?"), which we combined into one overall measure of participants' willingness to report the crime to responsible authorities (12 items, alpha=0.64).

Concern for the transgressor, group, and the self. Several similar items measured concern for various parties who may face consequences if the crime were reported on a scale from 1=*not at all concerned* to 10=*extremely concerned*. Concern for the transgressor was measured through three items (e.g., "I am concerned about what might happen to my colleague if I report this crime, I am worried about the long term impact on my colleague if I report this crime", alpha=0.98). Concern for one's group was measured through three items (e.g., "I am concerned about what might happen to my company if I report this crime, I am worried about the long term impact on my company if I report this crime", alpha=0.98). Concern for the self was measured through three items (e.g., "I am concerned about what might happen to me if I report this crime, I am worried about the long term impact it would have on me if I report this crime", alpha=0.97).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As in Study 1, we used a confirmatory factor analysis to test whether our four-factor model of the dependent variables (i.e., including separate factors for reporting likelihood, concern for the transgressor, concern for the self, and concern for the group) was an appropriate fit for the data. The model fit was excellent, with a TLI of 0.99, CFI of 0.99, and RMSEA of .042, 90% confidence interval (CI): [0.025, 0.058], and the full four-factor model fit the data

significantly better than a single-factor solution ($\chi^2(6)=3018.20$, $p<0.001$). There were significant positive correlations among the three factors of concern for the transgressor, group, and self which ranged between $r=0.37$ and $r=0.54$ (see Table 3), again supporting the idea that these factors were related but also distinct.

Results

Analytical Strategy

All analyses of variance were Type III and predicted the dependent variable with entitativity condition (high or low) and remorse condition (control, no remorse, or high remorse). Contrasts were coded to compare the low entitativity condition (-1) to the high entitativity condition (1). Analyses included two dummy codes to omit the no remorse condition (0) and compare it first to the control condition (1) and then to the high remorse condition (1).

Correlations between the measures of concern for the various parties, likelihood of reporting to various entities, and perceptions of the crime, as well as their descriptive statistics, are presented in Table 3.

Effect of Entitativity on Likelihood of Reporting the Crime

How entitativity affected participants' willingness to report the wrongdoing they had witnessed depended on whether or not the transgressor expressed remorse. There was a marginally significant interaction between the remorse condition and the entitativity condition variables, $F(1, 369)=2.87$, $p=0.058$, $\eta^2_P=0.02$ (see Figure 4).

When examining the dummy codes comparing the different levels of the remorse condition, there was a significant interaction between entitativity condition and the dummy code that compared the no remorse condition to the high remorse condition, $B=-0.42$, 95% CI:[-0.77, -0.08], $t(369)=-2.40$, $p=0.017$, indicating that participants responded differently to the

transgressor in the high vs. low entitativity group dependent on whether or not that transgressor expressed remorse for their actions. Breaking down this interaction revealed that when the transgressor stated that they did not feel remorse for their actions, participants who imagined a member of a higher entitativity group committing a crime did not differ in their willingness to inform the authorities about the incident (M=7.62, SD=1.27) from those who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group committing a crime (M=7.37, SD=1.41), M_{Diff}=0.12, 95% CI:[-0.12, 0.37], t(369)=0.98, p=0.400, d=0.18[-0.18, 0.54].

However, when the transgressor stated that they felt guilty about their actions, participants who imagined a member of a higher entitativity group committing a crime were less willing to inform the authorities about the incident (M=7.11, SD=1.44) than those who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group (M=7.71, SD=1.39), M_{Diff}=-0.30, 95% CI:[-0.54, -0.06], t(369)=-2.42, p=0.016, d=-0.42[-0.79, -0.06]. Only when a transgressor stated that they felt remorse for their actions were participants more reluctant to report the crimes of fellow members of high-entitativity groups to the authorities. In contrast, if a transgressor expressed no remorse for their actions, participants were equally willing to report this crime regardless of the nature of the group.

The interaction between entitativity condition and the dummy code that compared the control condition to the no remorse condition was not significant, B=-0.20, 95% CI:[-0.54, 0.14], t(369)=-1.18, p=0.241, suggesting that participants responded similarly to the transgressor in both of these scenarios.

Effect of Entitativity on Concern for the Transgressor

The interaction between the remorse condition and the entitativity condition did not reach significance for concern for the transgressor, F(1, 369)=1.63, p=0.198, η^2_P=0.01. When

examining the dummy codes comparing the levels of the remorse condition, the interaction between entitativity condition and the dummy code that compared the no remorse condition to the high remorse condition did not reach significance, B=0.59, 95% CI:[-0.14, 1.34], t(369)=1.60, p=0.112. This was driven by the fact that in general, participants who read about a highly entitative group member reported greater concern for the transgressor than participants who read about a member from a less entitative group.

However, only when the transgressor stated that they felt remorse was there a significant difference by entitativity condition. When the transgressor stated that they felt guilty about their actions, participants in the high entitativity group condition reported more concern about the transgressor (M=6.31, SD=3.00) than those who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group (M=4.56, SD=2.99), M_{Diff}=0.87, 95% CI:[0.35, 1.39], t(369)=3.29, p=0.001, d=0.58[0.22, 0.95]. See Figure 5.

When the transgressor stated that they did not feel remorse, ratings of concern did not differ by entitativity condition (M_{HE}=4.47, SD=2.99 vs. (M_{LE}=3.92, SD=2.98), M_{Diff}=0.27, 95% CI:[-0.25, 0.80], t(369)=1.02, p=0.307, d=0.18[-0.18, 0.54], and in the control condition, those who imagined a member of a highly entitative group committing a crime again did not differ in their concern (M=3.77, SD=2.87) from those who imagined a member of a lower entitativity group (M=3.15, SD=2.70), M_{Diff}=0.30, 95% CI:[-0.19, 0.81], t(369)=1.22, p=0.224, d=0.22[-0.12, 0.57].

The interaction between entitativity condition and the dummy code that compared the control condition to the no remorse condition again was not significant, B=0.04, 95% CI:[-0.69, 0.76], t(369)=0.10, p=0.922.

Mediational Analyses

We then conducted a mediational analysis to test whether, in the high remorse condition, entitativity concern for the transgressor, which in turn predicted decreased reporting, again controlling for other competing mechanisms.

Supporting our theorized model, in the high remorse condition, higher entitativity predicted increased concern for the transgressor, B=0.87, 95% CI:[0.33, 1.41], SE=0.27, t(120)=3.21, p=0.002, and greater concern for the transgressor predicted decreased likelihood of reporting the crime, B=-0.13, 95% CI:[-0.24, -0.03], SE=0.05, t(117)=-2.60, p=0.011 (see Table 4 for regression coefficients for the other variables included in the models). We calculated a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of entitativity on reporting likelihood via concern for the transgressor, using bootstrapping with 5,000 simulations. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero, 95% CI:[-0.48, -0.05], indicating that our mediational hypothesis was supported (see Figure 6).

To address endogeneity concerns, we again conducted a two-stage least squares (2SLS) regression analysis using the experimental condition (high vs. low entitativity) as an instrument when predicting reporting likelihood with concern for the transgressor variable. The Wu-Hausman test for this model was not significant, p=0.153, suggesting that endogeneity was not present, and in addition, in this analysis, concern for the transgressor significantly predicted reporting likelihood, B=-0.36, 95% CI:[-0.66, -0.05], SE=0.16, t(118)=-2.28, p=0.024, thus indicating that the statistical inference that greater concern for the transgressor decreases reporting likelihood is robust to concerns of endogeneity.

Discussion of Study 2

Overall, the results of Study 2, using a different scenario involving gross medical fraud, align with and build on the findings from Study 1. We systematically varied perceptions of

entitativity through descriptions of the workplace relationship, while holding the type of organization constant. To understand whether perceived remorse plays a key role in this process, we manipulated expressions of remorse by the transgressor. As with Study 1, our predicted model is supported: participants who imagined a highly entitative group member committing a crime reported greater concern for the transgressor which then reduced the likelihood of them reporting the wrongdoing. However, simply belonging to the same highly entitative group as the transgressor is not enough; concern for their suffering depends on whether the transgressor is perceived as remorseful over their wrongdoing or not. Overall, across Study 1 and Study 2, these causal relationships remain robust across different scenarios involving different types of groups (family vs. task groups), types of crimes committed, types of victims, and types of participants completing the study.

General Discussion

Observers are often outraged when they hear about scandals involving someone who could have intervened to prevent victims from suffering. From an observer's safe vantage point, it may be easy to believe that if one knew about a crime, one would immediately report it to the authorities. But previous research has uncovered compelling reasons for why potential whistleblowers often remain silent when faced with this dilemma. Although many of these reasons stem from self-interest, as the current research illustrates, some come from a compassionate place: concern over another's suffering. Unfortunately, in this case, concern for the transgressor culminates in silence which prevents wrongdoings from being addressed and victims from being protected from further harm.

The current studies add to our understanding of the psychological motivations of a potential whistleblower in three key ways. First, across two studies, we provide evidence that

moral concern for the transgressor predicts the likelihood of a potential reporter deciding to report wrongdoing or not. These results counter the notion that deciding to become a whistleblower is primarily a deliberation about cost and benefits to the potential reporter (Cassematis & Wortley, 2013; Gundlach, Douglass, & Martinko, 2003; Henik, 2008; Miceli, Near, Rehg, & Van Scotter, 2012). Reporting decisions can also be shaped by apparently altruistic concern for another person's well-being. The current research thus spotlights other-oriented motivations that reduce whistleblowing as an important area for future research. Second, we found that greater group entitativity heightened concern for the transgressor and thus reduced the reporting of crimes. This adds to past research on how other group characteristics (e.g., ingroup/outgroup membership) affect whistleblowing rates (e.g., Misch, Over, & Carpenter, 2018) and suggests that organizations that are highly unified may face particular challenges when it comes to encouraging reporting of wrongdoing. Third, we identified the mechanism underlying why concerns about the transgressor are heightened in highly entitative groups: potential reporters perceive that the transgressor felt remorse for their crime. Specifically, if a potential reporter infers remorse on the behalf of the transgressor, then concern for their well-being reduces reporting behavior. This illustrates how the perception and experience of moral emotions can shape whistleblowing, adding to the burgeoning literature on moral emotions and their role in workplace decision-making (e.g., Cohen et al., 2014; Greenbaum et al., 2019) and applying insights from the study of emotion to the whistleblowing literature.

Theoretical Contributions

First, this research adds to the literature on whistleblowing by introducing a novel type of moral consideration that potential reporters weigh when deciding whether or not to report a crime: concern for the person who commits a crime and their outcomes. Previous research on

moral concern and whistleblowing has examined potential reporters' concern for a variety of relevant parties affected by reporting a crime (i.e., for the self and for one's in-group), but no study has systematically examined how whistleblowers may experience moral concern for someone engaged in wrongdoing. In this case, just as outsiders may have a hard time imagining themselves failing to disclose serious wrongdoings, it may be the case that researchers have neglected examining concern for the transgressor because of their own blind spot - that is, failing to recognize that people can feel protective of someone in their organization who has engaged in obvious wrongdoing in the same way that people do for family members who transgress. Wilke, Wilke, and Viglione (2015) discuss the importance of using a family systems approach to understand workplace dynamics as 'corporate families.' Future research exploring the psychology of whistleblowers could incorporate a family systems perspective which recognizes that people in organizations are interconnected and interdependent, rather than isolated and independent task members (Bowen, 1985).

Second, the current research adds to the literature on the impact of moral emotions on whistleblowing by showing how perceived remorse and concern for another's suffering may actually prevent a potential reporter from engaging in the correct course of action. On the face of it, concern for the suffering of others may seem like it would compel people towards a morally favorable behavior when crimes are committed, such as protecting victims. However, at the heart of it, entitativity appears not only to increase people's feelings of vicarious guilt, but also to make it relatively easier to attribute complex emotions, such as remorse or regret over their actions, to others. The current research advances our understanding of moral emotions by showing that they operate in complex ways and serve cross-purposes. Future research could explore additional complexities underlying these effects, such as whether and how perception of

remorse by the transgressor is connected to the process of cognitive justification behind a whistleblower's decision to not report a wrongdoing by a fellow member (Latan, Jabbour, & Jabbour, 2019; Murphy & Dacin, 2011; Tsang, 2002; Smaili & Arroyo, 2017).

Third, our study adds to the emerging literature on organizational culture by highlighting some of the downsides to modern cultures that emphasize communal bonding and a family-like atmosphere (e.g., Kouchaki, Gino, & Feldman, 2019). Often, organizations actively foster a "team" dynamic at the workplace so that people can collaborate in their pursuit of a common goal in a positive emotionally engaged atmosphere (see Green, Finkel, Fitzsimons, & Gino, 2017). Experiencing closeness with others at work has many psychological benefits such as fulfilling a need to belong, creating friendships, etc. (e.g., Kirkhaug, 2010). Yet research in social psychology warns us about some of the pitfalls in judgment and decision-making that can occur in tight-knit groups (e.g., groupthink, conformity, deindividuation). Although practices that foster a family-like atmosphere might work to engender productivity and loyalty (two very important goals), this type of culture may also unfortunately increase the likelihood of ethical lapses in judgment. Creating organizational cultures where people feel belonging and loyalty without acknowledging some of the downsides these cultures create no longer seems like a viable option, especially in the face of so many publicly known and damaging ethical breaches. Future research should focus on the limitations of such cultures and practices that can prevent these cultures from having unintended detrimental impacts.

Practical Implications

Our studies suggest that organizations that are highly entitative may be particularly at risk of wrongdoing remaining unreported. Thus, organizations that have this characteristic (e.g., organizations with a culture that emphasizes unity) may need to take extra steps to ensure that

employees speak out about the unethical behavior that they observe. Organizations could instruct their work teams about how belonging to unified groups can lead to faulty decision-making in a variety of workplace situations, even for people who possess personality traits characterized as highly moral, such as honesty and conscientiousness (Cohen, et al., 2014). Acknowledging these vulnerabilities allows organizations to create ethically-minded group norms (Chen, Nichol, & Zhou, 2017).

Moving forward, our research points to several ways to encourage potential reporters to contact authorities instead of remaining silent. Entitativity involves perceptions of group unity, and therefore the tendency to value fellow group members over others is especially high in highly entitative groups. Greater efforts could be made to illustrate the plight of victims to help counteract this tendency. Highly entitative organizations could create a strong culture of protecting victims and valuing, for example, fairness instead of loyalty to one of their own when wrongdoing occurs (Waytz et al., 2013). In this case, explicitly incorporating language in code of conducts that espouses the company's values (e.g., placing fairness over loyalty) could be beneficial. Moreover, clear ramifications for members of the organization who knowingly conceal wrongdoing and fail to consider victim protections could help serve to counteract the perception that warm and positive workplaces, as those that are highly entitative may be, are associated with leniency when lapses occur (Kouchaki et al., 2019).

Another approach could reframe what it means to be compassionate when someone we care about engages in wrongdoing. Specifically, organizations could work to reframe reporting behavior as an act of compassion, whereby transgressors receive help or a chance to reform and turn around their lives as opposed to living with the burden of guilt or sinking into more criminal activities. Providing accounts of transgressors receiving second chances or receiving help to

correct their behavior could alleviate reporters' worries. Training managers for how to best alleviate these types of concerns from potential reporters could also facilitate reporting (Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2009).

Limitations and Future Research

One potential limitation of the current work is that it involved hypothetical dilemmas. As with many moral dilemmas, the reality of deciding whether or not to report wrongdoing involves a complex, deliberative process that may play out differently than in hypothetical decisions. However, research using hypothetical dilemmas helps illuminate affective and cognitive aspects of decision-making (Bostyn, Sevenhat, & Roets, 2018). In fact, a compelling aspect of these results is the persistent reluctance to report wrongdoing in highly-entitative groups even in a hypothetical situation. It would have been easy for participants to indicate that they would simply report the crime, as indeed would seem to be the socially desirable response, and yet they do not. Future research should explore these same mechanisms in more real-world settings, but our data already suggest that perceived remorse and concern for the transgressor are compelling reasons to not report wrongdoing, and these complex reasons may only be further exacerbated in behavioral studies.

The current research examined the effect of concern for the transgressor over and above concern for one's in-group, but how these forces may interact to predict whistleblowing and the particular role of group loyalty in these effects is unclear from the present studies. Future studies could build on the current research by further examining the role of loyalty in these processes. Research by Waytz et al., (2013) found that competing concerns between fairness and loyalty influence whistleblowing behavior. Valuing loyalty decreased the likelihood of reporting a transgressor in many past studies (see Dungan, Waytz, & Young, 2015 for a review). Perhaps in

the current research, people failed to make a psychological distinction between their feelings of loyalty to the transgressor and to the group, and thus in pursuing their own self-interest to avoid repercussions for reporting, they may have been able to strategically re-frame the moral value of loyalty to justify their silence (i.e., placing greater value on loyalty to the transgressor than loyalty to the group). Future studies that include systematic manipulations for loyalty to the group versus loyalty to the transgressor may help disentangle this process and help us understand when and how loyalty can be deployed for societal good.

Conclusion

It may be easy to believe that most people would simply condemn and report wrongdoing unless they are afraid of how it will impact them (e.g., putting them at risk of retaliation) or their group (e.g., harming the group's reputation). This paper highlights an underexamined yet critical barrier to reporting: concern for the person who committed the crime and their outcomes. In doing so, the current research illustrates how seemingly well-intentioned concerns about another person can prevent whistleblowing. Further, the current research illustrates how simply belonging to a highly entitative organization can discourage reporting. When a crime is reported, in the short term, victims are protected, and in the long term, the group is protected from further reputational and other kinds of damage, and transgressors may get the remedial help they need. But the low rates of reporting crimes at the workplace, both in the current studies and in reality, underscore just how difficult it is for people to come up with this ethical conclusion on their own.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for measures used in Study 1 (N=181).

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Reporting likelihood	6.05	2.59							
2. Perceived transgressor remorse	5.87	2.54	-.29*** [-.42, -.15]						
3. Concern for transgressor	6.08	3.19	-.54*** [-.63, -.43]	.46*** [.34, .57]					
4. Concern for group	5.67	3.20	-.43*** [-.54, -.30]	.24** [.10, .37]	.66*** [.57, .73]				
5. Concern for self	4.55	2.89	-.02 [-.16, .13]	.07 [-.07, .21]	.38*** [.25, .50]	.50*** [.39, .60]			
6. Perceived crime severity	8.21	1.51	.22** [.08, .35]	-.01 [-.15, .14]	-.06 [-.20, .08]	.00 [-.14, .15]	.02 [-.13, .16]		
7. Appraisal of behavior	1.65	0.97	-.14^{+} [-.28, .00]	.13^{+} [-.02, .27]	.07 [-.07, .21]	-.03 [-.17, .11]	-.00 [-.15, .14]	-.34*** [-.46, -.20]	

8. Perceived victim suffering	7.30	2.00	.07 [-.07, .21]	.15* [.01, .29]	.26*** [.12, .39]	.22** [.08, .35]	.07 [-.07, .21]	.40*** [.27, .51]	-.14^{+} [-.28, .00]

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). $^{+}p<0.10$. *$p< .05$. **$p<0.01$. ***$p<0.001$.

Table 2

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the models used in mediational analyses in Study 1.

Dependent variable	Perceived Remorse		Concern for the Transgressor		Reporting Likelihood	
Predictor	*B*	*B* 95% CI [LL, UL]	*B*	*B* 95% CI [LL, UL]	*B*	*B* 95% CI [LL, UL]
(Intercept)	4.10***	[1.71, 6.49]	4.29***	[1.95, 6.62]	5.05***	[2.88, 7.21]
Entitativity Condition	0.85***	[0.49, 1.21]	1.72***	[1.35, 2.08]	-0.48*	[-0.90, -0.06]
Moderate Crime Severity Condition	-0.12	[-0.54, 0.30]	0.73^{+}	[-0.08, 1.54]	0.09	[-0.63, 0.80]
Extreme Crime Severity Condition	0.20	[-0.05, 0.44]	0.56	[-0.25, 1.37]	0.03	[-0.69, 0.74]
Perceived transgressor remorse	--	--	0.33***	[0.19, 0.47]	-0.03	[-0.16, 0.10]
Concern for the transgressor	--	--	--	--	-0.34***	[-0.48, -0.19]
Concern for the group	--	--	--	--	-0.18*	[-0.32, -0.04]
Concern for the self	--	--	--	--	0.25***	[0.13, 0.37]
Perceived crime severity	0.01	[-0.25, 0.28]	-0.33*	[-0.58, -0.08]	0.17	[-0.05, 0.39]
Appraisal of behavior	0.30	[-0.07, 0.68]	-0.11	[-0.47, 0.25]	-0.09	[-0.41, 0.23]
Perceived victim suffering	0.13	[-0.06, 0.33]	0.27**	[0.08, 0.45]	0.26**	[0.10, 0.43]

Note. B represents unstandardized regression weights. *CI*=confidence interval. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. For the crime severity condition, mild crime severity was omitted as the base group to compare it using dummy codes to the moderate crime severity condition and the extreme crime severity condition.
*p< .05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for measures used in Study 2 (N=375).

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived transgressor remorse	4.44	2.53				
2. Concern for transgressor	4.35	3.07	.60*** [.53, .66]			
3. Reporting likelihood	7.52	1.38	-.32*** [-.41, -.23]	-.40*** [-.48, -.31]		
4. Concern for group	5.42	2.97	.33*** [.24, .42]	.54*** [.46, .61]	-.30*** [-.39, -.21]	
5. Concern for self	5.22	3.06	.29*** [.20, .38]	.37*** [.28, .46]	-.35*** [-.43, -.25]	.51*** [.43, .58]

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). ***$p<0.001$.

Table 4

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the models used in the mediational analysis in Study 2.

Dependent variable	Concern for the Transgressor		Reporting Likelihood	
Predictor	*B*	*B* 95% CI [LL, UL]	*B*	*B* 95% CI [LL, UL]
(Intercept)	5.44***	[4.90, 5.97]	8.64***	[8.03, 9.24]
Entitativity Condition	0.87**	[0.33, 1.41]	-0.18	[-0.43, 0.07]
Concern for the transgressor	--	--	-0.13*	[-0.24, -0.03]
Concern for the group	--	--	-0.01	[-0.12, 0.10]
Concern for the self	--	--	-0.08	[-0.17, 0.02]

Note. B represents unstandardized regression weights. *CI*=confidence interval. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.
*p< .05. **p<0.01. ***p<0.001.

Figure 1

Theoretical model for the current studies: People imagine that a transgressor feels greater remorse for their crimes when they are members of a highly entitative group, which leads people to be more concerned for the consequences that this transgressor would face if they were to report their crime, which decreases the likelihood of reporting.

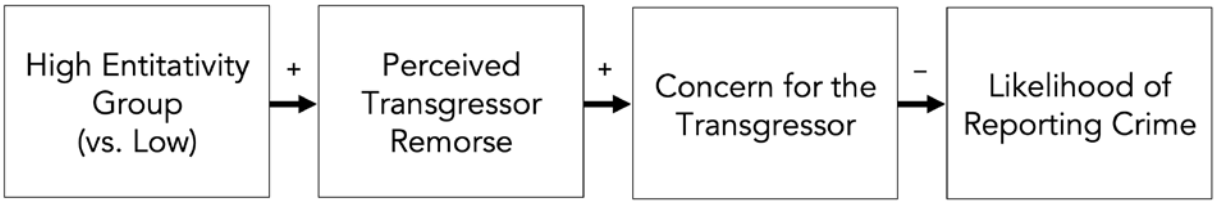
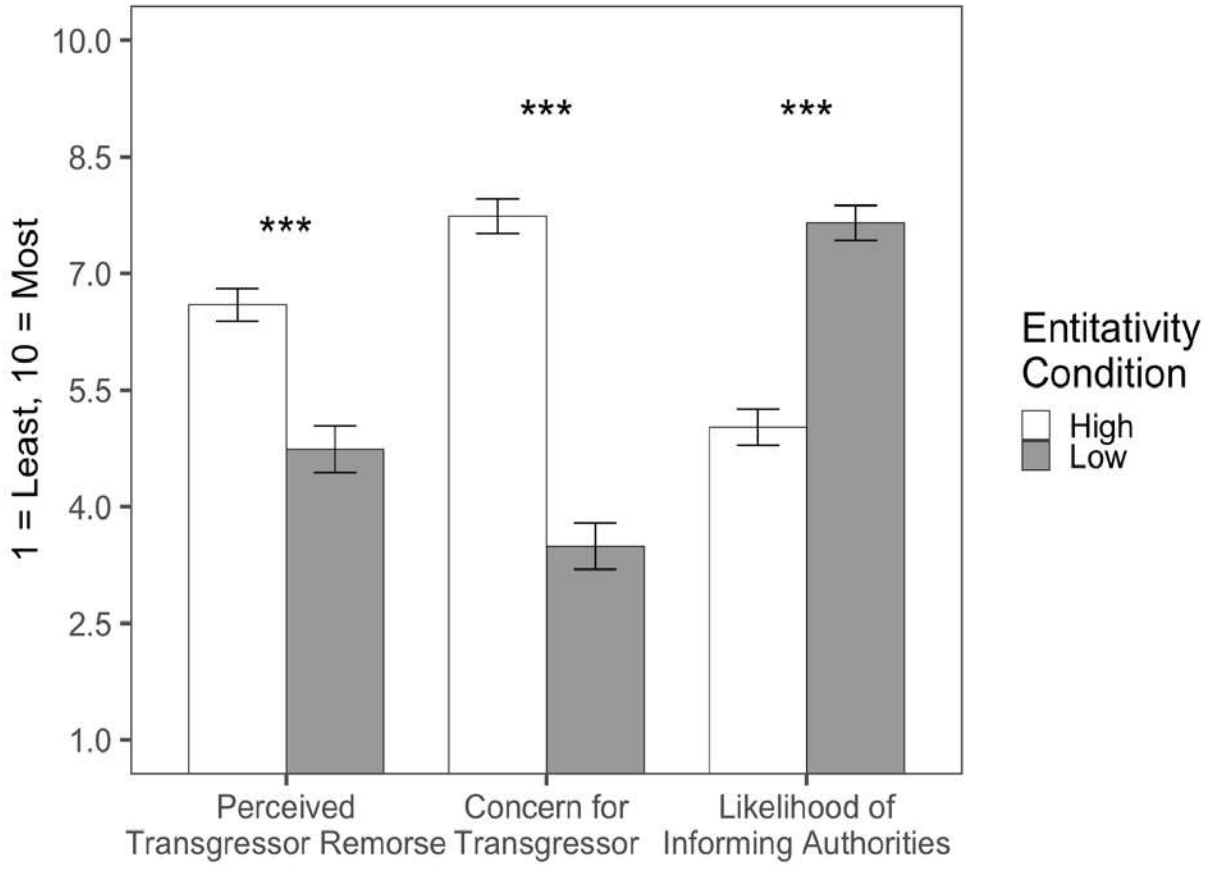


Figure 2

Perceived transgressor remorse, concern for the transgressor, and likelihood of informing the authorities about a crime by group entitativity (high: family, low: university).



Note. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. ***p<0.001.

Figure 3

Mediational analyses in Study 1: Entitativity predicts greater perceived transgressor remorse, which predicts greater concern for the transgressor, which predicts decreased likelihood of reporting a crime.

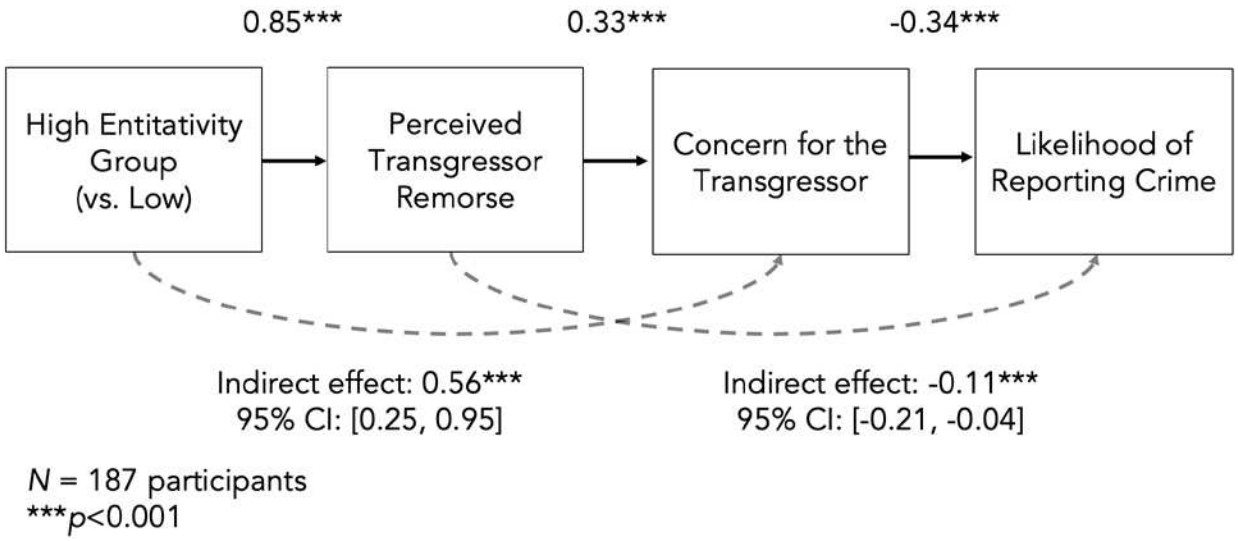
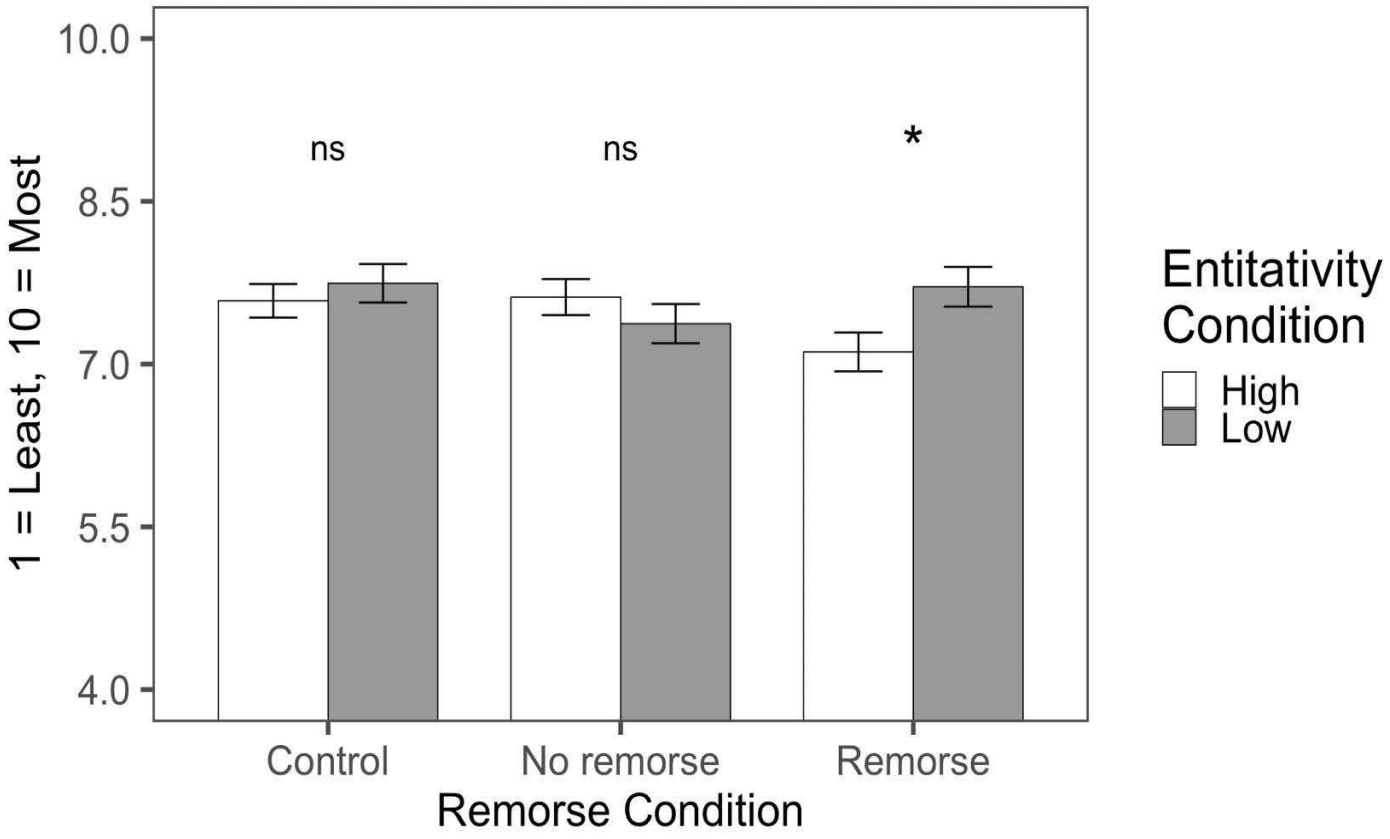


Figure 4

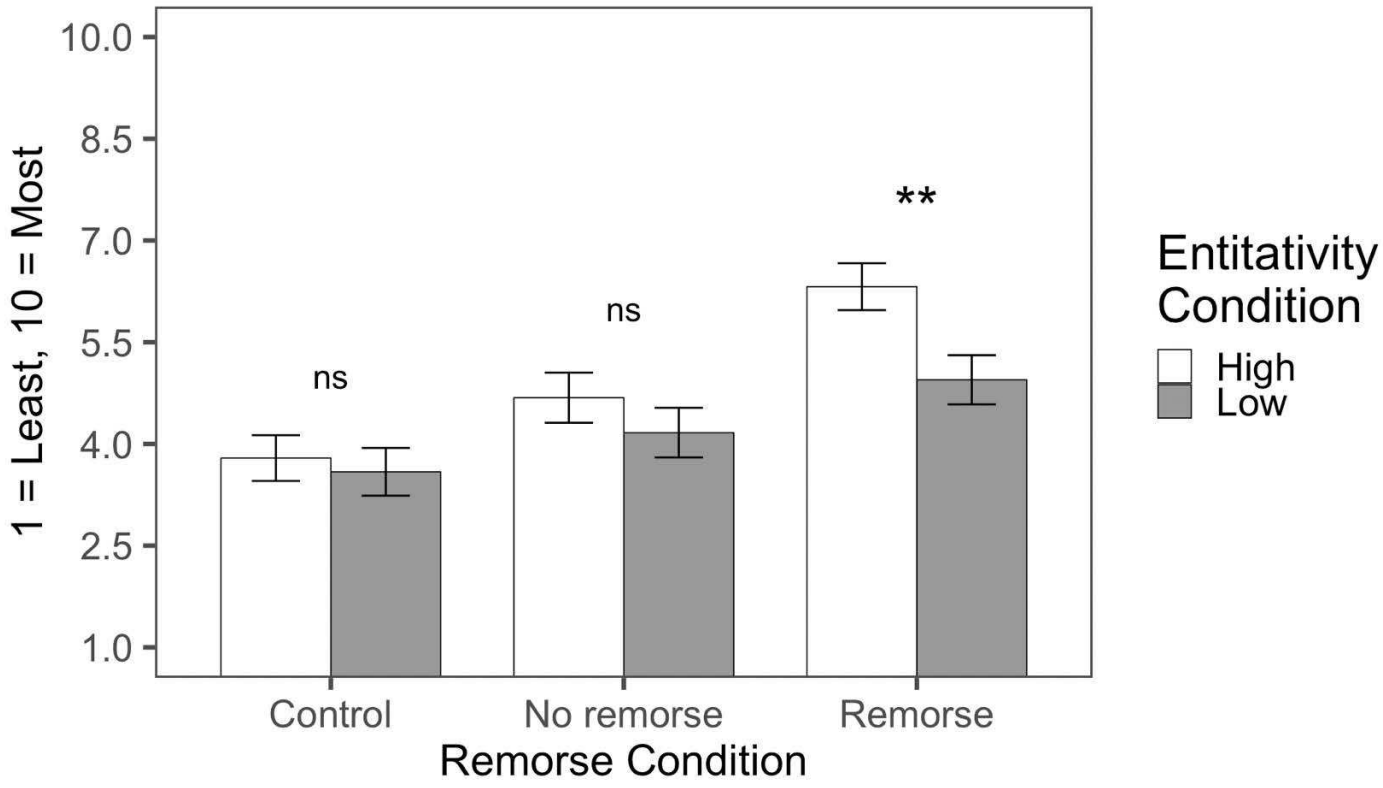
Likelihood of informing the authorities about a crime by group entitativity (high or low) and explicit transgressor remorse (control condition, no remorse, or high remorse).



Note. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. *p<0.005.

Figure 5

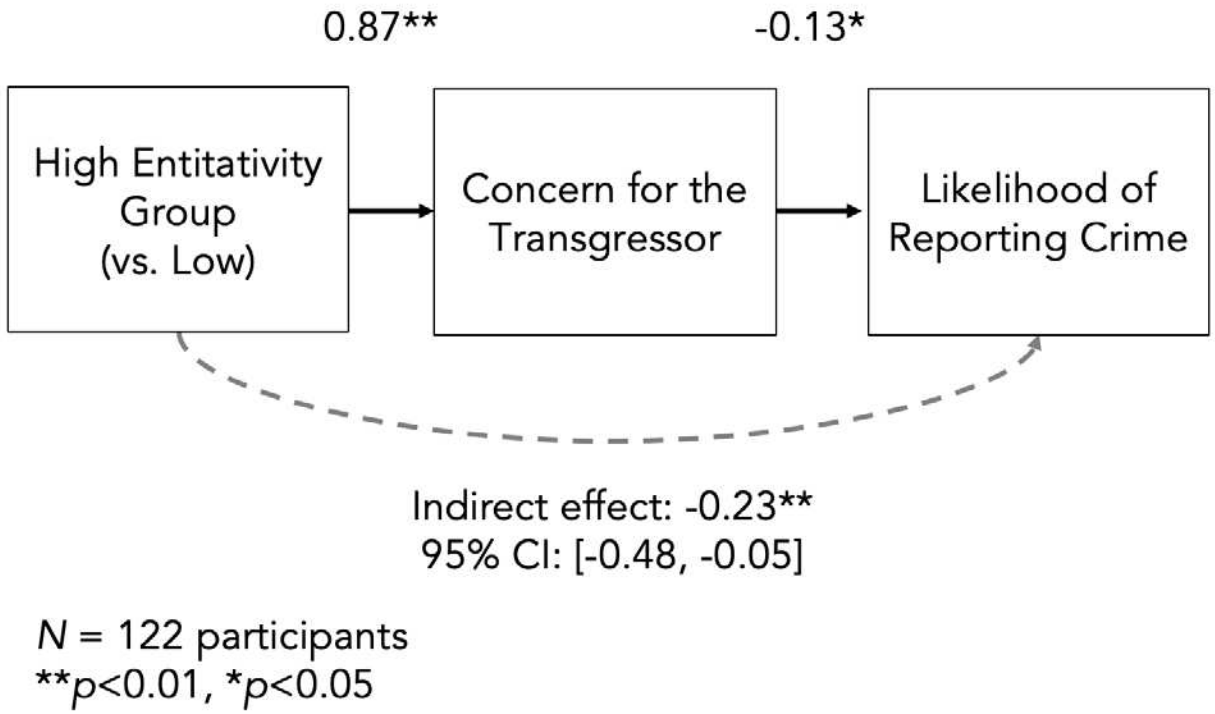
Concern for the transgressor by group entitativity (high or low) and explicit transgressor remorse (control condition, no remorse, or high remorse).



Note. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. **p<0.01.

Figure 6

Mediational analysis in Study 2: In the high remorse condition, entitativity predicts greater concern for the transgressor, which predicts decreased likelihood of reporting a crime.



Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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